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The Vedic hapax súśíśvi-s. — By EDWIN W. FAY,
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In *RV.* 1. 65, which is addressed to Agni, we find the following *pādas*:

2 c vārdhantim āpaḥ panvā súśíśvim

d rtāsya yonā gārbhe sújātam,

of which the first means in Latin something like

augent eum lymphae laude (?) *súśíśvim*

But what does *súśíśvim* mean? Oldenberg (*Sacr. Books of the East*, 46, 54) renders by 'the fine child' and Griffith's rendering is 'the growing babe'. I suggest that *súśíśvis* is rather the result of spirant shifting, in which popular etymology played a rôle, for *súśi-śvis*. Native authorities define *súśi-*, for which *súśi-* is a frequent variant (cf. also *súśi-rá-s* (1) 'cavus', (2) 'reed, bamboo'), by (1) *śoṣa-* 'ariditas'; and actual usage attests (2) 'cavum'. For (1) cf. *súśka-* 'aridus', noting *RV.* 1. 68. 2 b:

súśkād yád deva jīvá jāniṣṭhāh

arido <ligno> cum dive vivus natus es.

With these facts before us the interpretation of *súśi-śvis* as 'in arido <ligno> turgens' is self-suggesting, and the interpretation gains point for 1. 65. 2 c by the juxtaposition of the 'waters' with the 'dry'. The production of fire by the drill and the use of dry twigs as kindling need but to be noted, and I have elsewhere interpreted Skr. *ōṣa-dhi-s* 'plant' as generalized from an original 'Brenn-Pflanze' (*TAPA.*, 41, 25). If, however — and this I did in *KZ.*, 37, 154, to the satisfaction of as sane a mythologist as the late V. Henry — we can trace the Prometheus myth in the *Brāhmaṇas*, we must ask ourselves whether the 2^d meaning of 'cavum' is not rather to be recognized in *súśi-śvis*. Then the epithet will refer to the hollow reed of the Prometheus fire-myth. Even so, the reed is probably but an allotropic designation for the socket slab

wherein fire was begotten. The idea of 'hollow' in *sūśiśvis* lends point to the two references in 1. 65. 2 *d* to the womb wherein Agni was born.

For the posterius, *-śvi-*, only a word need be said: it is a weakest grade rootnoun used as a compounding final. The root is Skr. *śvā(y)-*: Av. *spā(y)-* 'turgere'. In the Agni-epithet *Mātariśvan-* which, as I am explaining in *KZ.* 45, 134 meant 'in materia turgens' (= 'materiae puer'), we have a cognate posterius *-śvan-* from the same root. As for the development of *mātari-*: Lat. *māteria* from *mātar-* 'mother', *credat Judaeus Apella*. But if I am right in deriving *māteria* from **(t)mater-* 'cutter' (of timber), it is possible that **māter-* 'mother' also comes from *(t)mater-* 'cutter'. Testimony to the activity of woman in wood-cutting in the savage and semi-savage races could doubtless be found in abundance (see, e. g., Mason, *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, pp. 32, 153), but the function of woman as a 'cutter' is better displayed, we may think, in the following: "The husband has slain the deer . . . and there his share of the operation ends. The woman . . . removes the skin . . . and then divides the carcass for immediate consumption or to be dried. In these (*sic*) she is a butcher, and the whole earth are (*sic*) her shambles. This meat she then proceeds to *apportion according to the rules of her tribe and her clan*" (*ibid.* p. 27). In Germany, if my limited observation goes for anything, woman is still the carver. — In the final shaping of **(t)māter-* the inevitable fusion therewith of the babbling child's *mamma* is not to be lost to sight.

Postscript.

For the explanation of Skr. *ōśadhis* as 'brenn-pflanze' cf. *φρύγανον* (: *φρύγει* 'roasts'), which became a regular designation, in the botanical classification of Theophrastus, for the class of shrubs.

In *sūśiśvis* the posterius should perhaps be written *-śiśvis*, with reduplication, cf. *saṁśiśvarī* (in *K. Z.* l. s. c.).